Pred

Lost Words and Lost Worlds

Modernity and the Language of Everyday Life in Late Nineteenth-Century Stockholm

The last quarter of the nineteenth century was the most dramatic era in the social and spatial transformation of Stockholm. During this time large-scale manufacturing industry rose and eclipsed small-scale artisan sectors of production; the city's population virtually doubled and there was a rapid extension and rebuilding of the urban fabric. Allan Pred reconstructs this transformation of Stockholm's local economy, civil society and built environment between 1880 and 1900 through an interpretation of lost elements of language, or forgotten fragments of daily discourse, of lost words and meanings that belonged to members of the working and periodically employed classes. His analysis reveals that a language of production, distribution and consumption practices subsumed a language of discipline-avoidance and survival tactics. He demonstrates that the 'folk geography', or language used for negotiating the city streets and getting from here to there, subsumed a language of ideological resistance; that a language of social reference and address, the tagging of nicknames on groups and individuals, subsumed a language of boundary transgression; and that these languages were cross-cut by folk humour, by a vocabulary of comic irony and irreverence.

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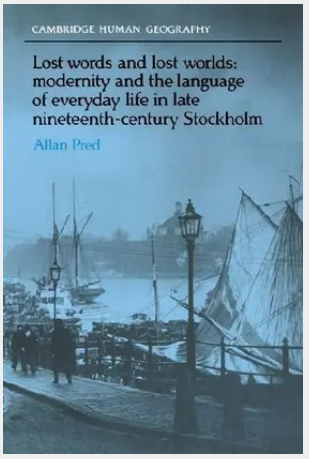

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